

[J. R. Glenn]

August, 29, 1939

Henry Houston (Negro Newspaperman)

624 E. Second St.

Charlotte, N. C.

Cora. L. Bennett, Writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser

No Names Changed C9-[?] - N.C. [?]

Steps lead directly from the sidewalk to the large, two story house of nine rooms, which is the home of Henry Houston. The house is quite spacious but, apparently, no attempt has been made to redecorate the interior according to modern trends. The first floor consists of a double living room, with sliding doors between, dining room, kitchen and study. On the second floor there are four bedrooms and bathroom.

In one corner of the yard, near the driveway entrance, hangs a small sign, "The Charlotte Post". The driveway leads to the back of the house where the printing shop is located in a small frame building. Here the Charlotte Post is printed.

Henry Houston, stout man of medium height, owns his own home as well as the newspaper. But here is the story as he tells it:

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"I have never had but one job outside of the newspaper business. That was when I worked as an insurance agent for several years. I was once a travelling agent for the insurance company and later district manager of one of the districts.

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"My first job in a newspaper office was as 'devil' or office boy. Naturally I got interested in that type of work while I was there. For eighteen years I worked in the Southern Newspaper Union of Charlotte. I learned all about the work in those years.

I've been in Charlotte practically all my life. I was born in Mecklenburg County and my mother brought me to Charlotte to live when I was just three years old. You see, my father was killed in a mine before I was born. I was the youngest of ten children and strange to say they are all dead except the oldest boy and myself. After my father died, naturally my mother had to get some place where she could get domestic work to support the family. So that's why we moved to town.

I attended the city schools and have never been to nobody's college. I went to school at night for a short time but, for the most part, my education was limited to the grades. But that did not keep me from aspiring to make good in the world. I know I've been handicapped somewhat by my limited education, but I've never brooded over that fact. I've made the best out of what little opportunity I've had and I think I've lived a pretty full life. No one in this town has fought harder to better the educational opportunities for negro children than I have. My own boy finished the city schools and I have sent him to Livingston College where he got his A.B. degree. I had a girl who died before she finished her college work at the same school.

"After I stopped working for the insurance company I established the Charlotte Post, that's been twelve years ago now. I own the newspaper in full, as well as my own print shop. My son and myself do all the work. I am editor and he is the managing editor. Both of us operate the press. We do job printing in connection with the other work. We belong to the

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Associated Negro Press as well as other news agencies. The paper is edited weekly and is sent all over North and South Carolina. The present weekly circulation is about forty two thousand copies.

"I have entered quite fully into the civic life of the community, I believe. The colored civic league was organized by me and we were the organization that led the fight to tear down those old frame school buildings in the city and build up-to-date buildings. I also helped to organize the Negro Citizen League, the chief purpose of which was to stimulate interest in the negroes of this town exercising the right of suffrage. When we first began our fight there were not many voters here and now we have 4 about three thousand negro voters.

"Right after the war I organized a song service that became an institution. It appealed to the youth and staid in operation for about fifteen years. Every Sunday afternoon great crowds would get together and sing.

"Then I served as secretary of the Community Service, directing the social work of the community. I was interested in the recreational program of the colored youth of Charlotte and helped sponsor a seven day recreation program. We continued this work until the building where our headquarters were located burned. Then we had to give up the work to some extent. I am still a member of the committee on recreation.

"Fraternally, I belong to all the organizations and am mayor and State Deputy of the Elks Lodge. Religiously, I am a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

"Recently we have organized in the city, "The Crusaders Organization". The purpose of this organization is to fight crime among our people. We are trying to get at the cause of crime, and are centering our attention on the children of the city. We have tried to get as many children in sunday school as possible. First we baited 5 the sunday schools with candy. For several sundays all of the children who went to sunday school received some candy. After the children got in the school it was the work of the church to keep them

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there. Then we offered prizes to the sunday school having the largest number of new members on a certain Sunday.

“The lates latest plan of the Crusaders is to organize a radio program to continue the fight against crime.

“Although there is a great deal being said about the youth problem, and it is indeed a great problem among all races, I believe the colored youth of our land has a very hopeful future. Most of our children have a pretty bad beginning, in the fact that the majority of their mothers are employed in domestic work. They leave the children early in the morning and return late at night. But in spite of this great handicap I believe that as day nurseries are established for our people, as directed recreation programs are sponsored and as education continues to lift our people from ignorance, the youth will take advantage of the various facilities now being sponsored for their benefit.”